

Remarks and Arguments

Applicant requests entry of the Amendment After Final filed on November 20, 2008. As set forth in the Examiner's December 15, 2008 Interview Summary and Advisory Action, the Amendment After Final overcomes the rejection based on Porter et al. However, in the Advisory Action the Examiner stated that claim 1 was still relatively broad and referenced two patents to Harding, US Patent 5,538,426 and 6,488,501.

This Preliminary Amendment includes an amendment of independent claim 1 to address the Examiner's objections regarding the structure and orientation of various features of applicant's claimed extension piece, in order to more clearly distinguish the claimed extension piece from the referenced prior art.

In summary, amended claim 1 has added the following features:

- the head part has "one end and a remote end;"
- the threaded stem is "arranged at said one end of the head part"; and
- the head part has "at said remote end" the at least one reference form.

Support for these amendments are based on the description at page 18, lines 18 and 29.

In contrast, the structure cited by the Examiner from Harding 426, are two separate pieces, namely sleeve 11 of Figs. 3-4, and bolt 12 of Fig. 5. Thus, Harding 426 does not show applicant's claimed extension piece having a head part having one end and a remote end, with a threaded stem arranged at the one end of the head part.

Still further, the flattened surface 18 cited by the Examiner as a reference surface, is not part of a reference form provided at the remote end of the head part, as claimed by applicant.

Still further, what the Examiner regards as “gripping surfaces,” namely the hexagonal portion 22 of sleeve 11, is not located between the reference form and the threaded stem as claimed by applicant.

Still further, what the Examiner references as a bevel around the middle of the sleeve 11 is not part of applicant’s claimed reference form at one end of the extension piece.

Thus, Harding 426 fails to teach or suggest the subject matter of the present claims.

The second Harding reference, Harding 501 shows in Figs. 8-19 a tubular post 40 having a tubular coping 41, a flange 64 at one end and a hexagonal portion 44 at the other end. A cylindrical portion 45 extends co-axially from a larger diameter portion of the post 40. The Examiner references a threaded stem which is received by element 40, and thus is not a part of the tubular post 40 (compare applicant’s claimed extension piece having a threaded stem at one end). Further, the bevel 43 relied upon by the Examiner in Harding 501 is not provided on the reference form at one end of an extension piece in the manner claimed by applicant. Thus, the features of applicant’s amended claim 1 are believed to patentably distinguish over the components relied upon by the Examiner in each of Harding 426 and Harding 501.

Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

RECONSIDERATION

It is believed that all claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that a teleconference would expedite prosecution of the present application the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Any amendments or cancellation or submissions with respect to the claims herein is made without prejudice and is not an admission that said canceled or amended or otherwise affected subject matter is not patentable. Applicant reserves the right to pursue canceled or amended subject matter in one or more continuation, divisional or continuation-in-part applications.

To the extent that Applicant has not addressed one or more assertions of the Examiner because the foregoing response is sufficient; this is not an admission by Applicant as to the accuracy of such assertions.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any fees in addition to fees submitted herewith that may be required to enter/allow this response and any accompanying papers to our deposit account 02-3038 and credit any overpayments thereto.

Respectfully submitted,

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